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**Operational Level Intelligence:  
An Alternate Approach**

**A Monograph  
by  
Major Linda L. Linden  
Military Intelligence**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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intelligence is not adequate for the development of a joint theater intelligence architecture. Neither published doctrine nor unified command practices meet the necessary criteria for military doctrine. But the root cause for the inadequacy is the failure to properly define operational level intelligence. Existing definitions are mere tautologies, and descriptions of the concept focus on intelligence management, not on the nature of operational level intelligence itself. An alternative approach to the problem is offered by defining operational level intelligence in terms of enemy operational level linkages instead of friendly ones, and the effect of this redefinition on future doctrinal formats is discussed.

School of Advanced Military Studies  
Monograph Approval



Name of Student: Major Linda L. Linden

Title of Monograph: Operational Level Intelligence: An Alternate Approach

Approved by:

Robert M. Epstein, Ph.D.

Monograph  
Director

Colonel William H. Janes, M.A.

Director,  
School of  
Advanced Military  
Studies

Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

Director,  
Graduate  
Degree Programs

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Operational Level Intelligence: An Alternate Approach by MAJ Linda L. Linden, USA, 36 pages.**

This monograph examines the current state of operational level intelligence. The research question to be answered is: "Is current doctrine on operational level intelligence adequate for the development of a joint theater intelligence architecture?" The two major subordinate questions posed by the research question are: a) What is the current doctrine; and b) What is "adequate," in terms of both doctrinal support to procedures and the intelligence needed by an operational commander. To answer the first question, the role of doctrine is described, then existing statements of intelligence doctrine as found in JCS and Service publications are examined. Next, there is an assessment of theater intelligence procedures and organizations currently employed by some of the Unified Commands. The second question is answered by examining the relationship of current procedures to stated doctrine and by investigating the nature of operational level intelligence.

The monograph concludes that current doctrine on operational level intelligence is not adequate for the development of a joint theater intelligence architecture. Neither published doctrine nor unified command practices meet the necessary criteria for military doctrine. But the root cause for the inadequacy is the failure to properly define operational level intelligence. Existing definitions are mere tautologies, and descriptions of the concept focus on intelligence management, not on the nature of operational level intelligence itself. An alternative approach to the problem is offered by defining operational level intelligence in terms of enemy operational level linkages instead of friendly ones, and the effect of this redefinition on future doctrinal formats is discussed.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The theory of major operations . . . presents extraordinary difficulties, and it is fair to say that very few people have clear ideas about its details -- that is, ideas which logically derive from basic necessities.<sup>1</sup>

Although Carl von Clausewitz wrote these words in 1830, they are applicable to the United States military's current struggle with joint doctrine for the operational level of war. This monograph is specifically concerned with intelligence at the operational level of war. It summarizes the extraordinary difficulties inherent in the problem and attempts to present some clear ideas on it, logically derived from the basic necessity of providing the operational level commander the information he needs on the enemy.

With the publication of the 1982 edition of FM 100-5, the United States Army, in recognition of the complexity of modern war, introduced operational art as one level of a tri-level structure of war. The 1986 version of FM 100-5 reinforced this concept, defining operational art in terms of its critical role of translating strategic aims into battlefield success. Although our sister services may have had an intellectual understanding of the concept initially, they did not see it as applicable to air or naval warfare. In fact, true application in the joint arena is only now beginning to be reflected in doctrine.<sup>2</sup> As it makes its way into joint doctrine, operational art sends ripples of change through each functional area, to include operational level intelligence.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act, the renewal of interest in the operational level of war, and recent experience all indicate that the

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<sup>1</sup> Clausewitz, Carl von: On War; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976; edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret; p. 70. The quote is from an unfinished note, presumed written in 1830.

<sup>2</sup> See JCS Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations (Washington: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 1989, Final Draft)

focus of future U.S. military operations will be at the joint operational level. Intelligence operations in this arena are particularly complex, and the joint community is just beginning to formulate the necessary doctrine. Given the importance of intelligence to commanders at all levels; the technical nature of intelligence collection, processing, and transmission; the scarcity of resources; and the fact that American intelligence resources tend to be focused at the tactical and strategic levels; there is a danger that, without a solid doctrinal foundation, the operational level commander will not have the unique intelligence necessary for the successful prosecution of campaigns.

The research question to be answered in this monograph is: "Is current doctrine on operational level intelligence adequate for the development of a joint theater intelligence architecture?" The two major subordinate questions posed by the research question are: a) What is the current doctrine; and b) What is "adequate," in terms of both doctrinal support to procedures and the intelligence needed by an operational commander. To answer the first question, we shall describe the role of doctrine, then examine existing statements of intelligence doctrine as found in JCS and Service publications. Then we shall assess theater intelligence procedures and organizations currently employed by some of the Unified Commands. To answer the second question, we shall examine the relationship of current procedures to stated doctrine; and then we shall investigate the nature of operational level intelligence in greater depth, attempting thereby to determine what intelligence support an operational commander needs. Current doctrine will be judged adequate if its precepts are echoed in current practices, and if their implementation yields the type of intelligence needed by the operational commander.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In examining doctrine, I have used the three basic documents which have the greatest amount of material on operational level intelligence: FM 100-5 and FM 34-134 for Army doctrine, and JCS Pub 2-0 (Final Draft) for joint doctrine. In addition, since the latter is still in Final Draft form and may change significantly before final publication, I have used Pubs 1-02 and 2 for basic concepts, and where possible I have cross-checked critical concepts of 2-0 with the Final Draft of JCS Pub 3-0.

## **THE DOCTRINE**

### **Role of Doctrine**

Before examining the current doctrine on operational level intelligence, we must come to an understanding of what doctrine is, and the role it plays in shaping military procedures. We'll go at it by looking at some standard definitions, then synthesizing the common elements.

[Doctrine is] something taught; teachings. . . an official statement of a nation's policy. . . refers to a theory based on carefully worked out principles and taught or advocated by its adherents. . . .  
[Distinguished from dogma, which] is handed down by authority as true and indisputable <sup>4</sup>

The important points about this basic definition are that doctrine is based on carefully worked out principles, that it constitutes an official statement, that it is taught, and that it is not necessarily indisputable. The JCS definition reflects these same points, describing doctrine as:

Fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application.<sup>5</sup>

The US Army's definition is basically similar to the two just quoted, but its clarity and detail in explaining how doctrine influences military activities merits full citation here:

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<sup>4</sup> Webster's New World Dictionary, Victoria E. Neufeldt, editor-in-chief, 3rd college edition (Cleveland: Simon & Schuster, 1988), p. 402. Hereafter referred to as Webster's.

<sup>5</sup> JCS Pub 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (formerly known as JCS Pub 1; Washington: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1 June 1987. With changes incorporated 30 September 1988), p. 118. The definition quoted applies to DOD/IADB, not to NATO.

An army's fundamental doctrine is the condensed expression of its approach to fighting campaigns, major operations, battles, and engagements. Tactics, techniques, procedures, organizations, support structure, equipment and training must all derive from it. It must be rooted in time-tested theories and principles, yet forward-looking and adaptable to changing technologies, threats, and missions. It must be definitive enough to guide operations, yet versatile enough to accommodate a wide variety of worldwide situations. Finally, to be useful, doctrine must be uniformly known and understood.<sup>6</sup>

From these three definitions, we see that doctrine is:

- Official, but not dogmatic.
- Based on fundamental, well thought-out principles.
- Taught to and understood by all elements of the military forces.
- Flexible enough to accommodate change in the military environment.
- Definitive enough to serve as the foundation for implementing specific military procedures.

These five elements of doctrine will comprise the primary set of criteria by which we will judge the adequacy of operational level intelligence doctrine.

## **Defining Operational Level Intelligence**

In order to establish doctrine for operational level intelligence, one must have a clear notion of what it is: its basic definition as well as its unique characteristics. Yet, as we shall see in the following paragraphs, doctrine writers do not make either of these points clear. Basic definitions of operational level intelligence seem simple, but they are ambiguous by virtue of their generality. JCS Pub 2-0 defines it as "intelligence required for the planning and conduct of campaigns

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<sup>6</sup> FM 100-5 Operations (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, May 1986) p 6

and operations."<sup>7</sup> FM 34-130 defines it similarly as "intelligence required for the planning and conduct of campaigns within a theater of war."<sup>8</sup>

However, since both JCS Pub 3-0 and FM 100-5 define operational art as the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations, the definitions of operational level intelligence boil down to the notion that it is that intelligence necessary to support operational art. However accurate this may be, it is a tautology, and as such it is only marginally useful. We are still left with a very basic question: "What *is* operational level intelligence?" As the answer is not to be found in basic definitions, we turn to the body of doctrinal literature, in hopes of discovering what it *does* as opposed to what it *is*.

## Current Doctrine

Our method for examining this body of material will be to list each publication's concepts of the scope and tasks of operational level intelligence, then note how the list differs from tactical and strategic intelligence. Such a process will allow us to identify each publication's perspective on the unique aspects of operational level intelligence. We will start with the Army publications, then compare them with joint publications, finally summarizing points of agreement and difference.

FM 100-5 adopts a requirements-driven approach to operational level intelligence by describing what the operational commander must know about the enemy and terrain.<sup>9</sup> Since the

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<sup>7</sup> DISJO, p. II-3.

<sup>8</sup> FM 34-130, p. D-3

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 28-31

enemy's centers of gravity are the focus of an effective campaign plan, the manual clearly implies that their identification must be the focus of the operational level intelligence effort. In general, the scope of the operational intelligence estimate will be broader than that of a tactical estimate, extending to social, political, economic, and personality matters which may affect enemy activity within a theater of operations. Operational considerations of terrain are likewise more expansive in scope, with the focus less on terrain features than on the interrelationship of localities and facilities within and adjacent to the theater of operations.

By stating the critical intelligence needs for campaign planning, FM 100-5 indirectly establishes the requirement for four major operational intelligence capabilities. The first of these is the capability for detailed, sophisticated analysis. Such analytical capability is necessary not only to deal with the complex problem of identifying the enemy's centers of gravity, but also to respond to the requirement that,

Most important operational intelligence must attempt to probe the mind of the enemy commander. It must see the theater through his eyes, visualize which courses of action are open to him, and estimate which he is most likely to adopt.<sup>10</sup>

The second operational intelligence capability identified by FM 100-5 involves data handling.

Units with operational responsibilities perform intelligence operations and analyses for the campaign, its major operations, *as well as its battles*. . . (Emphasis mine.) As in tactical level analysis, numbers, types, mobility, morale, and equipment of enemy forces are considered.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, detailed tactical information on the enemy is required for the entire theater of operations, not only to support the individual battles and major operations of the campaign, but also to build a data

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<sup>10</sup> FM 100-5, p. 30

<sup>11</sup> FM 100-5, p. 29

base from which to produce the broader intelligence analyses required by the operational commander. The sheer volume of this information mandates a sophisticated data handling system, not only for purposes of storing and transmitting the data, but also for manipulating it in support of analytical efforts.

The third operational intelligence capability identified by FM 100-5 concerns the scope of the collection effort.

In preparing the campaign intelligence estimate, staff officers make use of the reconnaissance and surveillance assets of all services, allies, and national agencies. They also use all available human sources from agents to guerrillas and long-range reconnaissance units and the meteorological and geographical references on the area.<sup>12</sup>

The obvious inference here is that the operational commander will have some degree of control over the collection priorities of this vast array of assets, but the manual omits specific discussion of this important matter. We will examine the concept in more detail when we look at joint doctrine.

The fourth operational intelligence capability identified by FM 100-5 concerns support to OPSEC and deception planning:

The commander must attempt to mislead the enemy concerning when, where, and how he will concentrate for battle and what his ultimate aims are.<sup>13</sup>

In order to mislead the enemy, one must know what his intelligence collection and processing capabilities are, and how they interact with his decision making process.

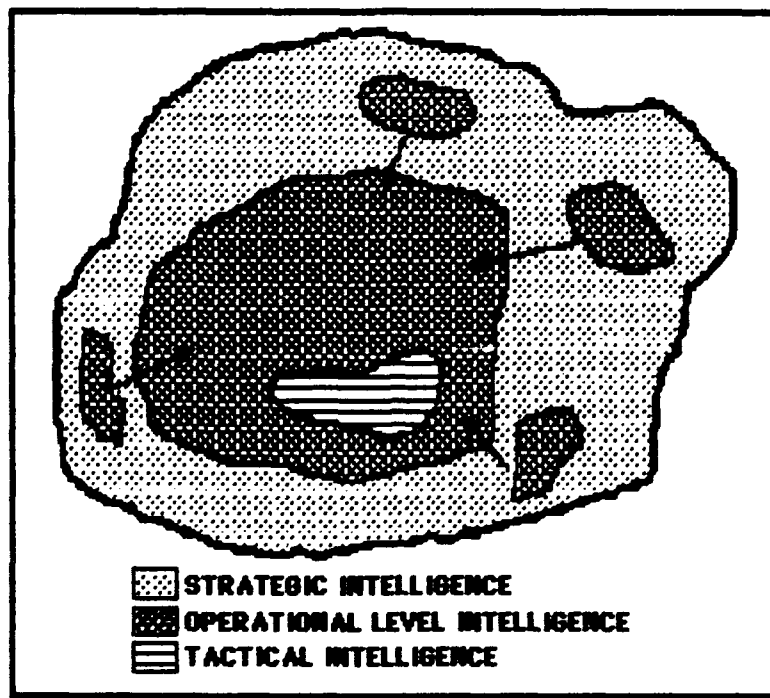
In summary, FM 100-5 defines the scope of operational level intelligence as subsuming tactical intelligence, but extending to the inclusion of non-military aspects of enemy activity. Although such non-military aspects fall into the category of strategic intelligence, their consideration in operational level intelligence is limited to

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<sup>12</sup> FM 100-5, p. 30

<sup>13</sup> FM 100-5 p. 30

effects on the theater of operations. This concept is modelled as follows:



By identifying the critical intelligence needs for campaign planning, FM 100-5 lays the foundation for critical tasks of operational level intelligence:

- Perform detailed and sophisticated analysis, in order to be able to identify enemy centers of gravity and to "probe the mind of the enemy commander." Subordinate implied tasks include processing raw data; producing finished intelligence; and receiving, handling, and disseminating all-source intelligence. A final implication is that operational level intelligence personnel must be highly experienced analysts.
- Store and manipulate a large quantity of data. The data to be stored includes tactical level data for the entire theater of operations, plus non-military data affecting the theater, plus geographic and climate/weather data. This implies a complex automated data base, with multiple interconnected sub-data bases.

- Use all collection assets targeted within the theater. The manual is unclear whether this means task some of those assets, or merely use their output to produce all-source intelligence.

- Support OPSEC and deception planning and operations.

Turning to FM 34-130, we find that it reflects the operational level intelligence requirements identified in FM 100-5 but organizes them into functional tasks that fit in with established tactical and strategic organizations. Essentially, FM 34-130 takes a mechanistic approach to operational level intelligence, describing it as procedurally and substantively very similar to tactical intelligence, with some strategic concepts incorporated.<sup>14</sup> It establishes the focus of operational level intelligence by stating that "intelligence functions concentrate on data collection that leads to the identification, location, and analysis of strategic and operational centers of gravity." The five operational level intelligence tasks are: situation development, target development, electronic warfare, security and deception, and indications and warning. The first four tasks are essentially the same as the four tactical IEW tasks, and the fifth is an addition which allows for peacetime data base building and prediction of enemy activity.

Although FM 34-130 goes into considerable detail concerning the mechanics of operational level intelligence analysis, the focus is almost exclusively on the graphics and methodology for a conventional war against a Soviet style enemy. The manual's "super-tactical" approach to operational level intelligence, if it were analyzed in terms of the organizational, training, and equipment requirements necessary to carry it out, would result in an operational intelligence organization rivalling our national agencies. The problems of unconventional/insurgent warfare are treated separately, with the implication that the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war do not apply. In summary, FM 34-130 may yield some minor

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<sup>14</sup> "IEW [intelligence electronic warfare] tasks performed at the tactical level of war, and the elements and mechanics of each IEW task, are adapted to operational level requirements" FM 34-130, p. D-4

methodological insights into graphic analysis, but it is of little value as implementing doctrine for operational level intelligence.<sup>15</sup>

Lastly, we turn to joint publications for operational level intelligence implementing doctrine. The two most significant of these are JCS Pub 2 Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF) and the final draft of JCS Pub 2-0 Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Joint Operations (DISJO). UNAAF provides the authoritative basis for conduct of operational level intelligence, and DISJO establishes implementing doctrine.

The basis of the joint force commander's authority to conduct intelligence operations lies in the concept of operational command, or OPCOM. This is "the authority to perform those functions of command involving the composition of subordinate forces, assignment of tasks, designation of objectives, and authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission."<sup>16</sup> Although OPCOM is exercised solely by CINCs (of unified and specified commands) and normally accomplished through commanders of subordinate forces, it includes the authority to "retain or delegate operational control or tactical control as necessary."<sup>17</sup> [Note that, unless otherwise stated in the mission order, a JTF commander exercising operational control (OPCON) has the same implied intelligence tasking authority as does the CINC in exercising OPCOM.<sup>18</sup>] The concept of tactical control, in particular, is fundamental to the CINC's intelligence tasking authority over component commands:

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<sup>15</sup> Note that FM 34-1, published in 1987 and the Army's keystone intelligence electronic warfare manual, is exclusively tactical, never once mentioning operational level intelligence. Thus, FM 34-130 is the best available source for Army operational level intelligence implementing doctrine.

<sup>16</sup> JCS Pub 2 Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF) (Washington: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, December 1986), p. 3-9.

<sup>17</sup> UNAAF, p. 3-9.

<sup>18</sup> UNAAF, p. 3-9.

[TACON] provides sufficient authority for controlling and directing the application of force or tactical use of combat support assets. . . . TACON is particularly well suited to the local direction and control of elements . . . that are inherently capable of rapid reaction to the tactical requirements of several commanders whose forces are dispersed over a relatively wide area.<sup>19</sup>

Other specific guidance on the exercise of OPCOM which supports a centralized notion of intelligence tasking is that the CINC has the authority and responsibility:

- To employ forces within his command as he considers necessary to carry out missions assigned to the command.
- To coordinate and approve those aspects of administration, support (including control of resources and equipment, internal organization, and training), and discipline necessary to carry out missions assigned to the command.
- To plan for, deploy, direct, control, and coordinate the action of assigned forces.
- To exercise directive authority over all elements of the command, in relationships with foreign governments (including the armed forces of those governments) and other agencies of the US Government.
- Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense, to function as the US military single point of contact with other DOD elements, the US diplomatic mission, [and] other US agencies . . .
- To establish plans, policies, and overall requirements for the intelligence activities of the command.<sup>20</sup>

Although UNAAF does not prescribe operational intelligence organizations or tasks, it does make some general recommendations. For example, stating that unified commanders must know the current situation, including enemy capabilities and intentions, UNAAF goes on to say that "this is best achieved with a directly subordinate, single intelligence authority."<sup>21</sup> This suggests the J2's role as a central filter point for all intelligence operations both up and down the chain of command. Finally, UNAAF suggests the

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<sup>19</sup> UNAAF, p. 3-16.

<sup>20</sup> UNAAF, pp. 3-10 and 3-11.

<sup>21</sup> UNAAF, p. 3-48

following intelligence-related activities appropriate to the joint force commander:

- List essential elements of information (EEI).
- Generate collection requirements based on EEI.
- Task appropriate collection resources to provide information on stated EEI. The assignment of collection tasks will be predicated on the availability and capability of the collection asset to accomplish the mission with due consideration given to the time required for collection and transmission of pertinent information. Collection management will ensure the best use of limited collection resources while avoiding unnecessary duplicative tasking. Information that cannot be collected by assigned or direct support assets will be requested through collection management channels for tasking of higher echelons, including theater or national assets.
- Establish special collection activities.
- Develop tactical airborne reconnaissance plan that includes all assets, as required.
- Develop ocean surveillance/ASW plan as required.
- Develop reporting criteria (by subjective areas, reference appropriate regulations, include alternate and skip-echelon procedures).
- Provide guidance for processing/analysis of raw info.
- Determine information and production required to support the assigned mission. Levy production requirements, and, if required, develop finished intelligence data bases and automated files. Intelligence must be tailored to the needs of the supported and subordinate commanders and the specifics of anticipated operations.
- Develop procedures for timely dissemination of intelligence (sanitize, decompartmentalize).
- Provide for combined intelligence procedures.
- Conduct counterintelligence, OPSEC, communications security, and censorship <sup>22</sup>

Summarizing, the joint force commander has the *implied* authority (nowhere is it specifically stated in UNAAF) to establish a centralized intelligence effort for the purpose of supporting plans and operations, and to direct the intelligence resources of subordinate units as necessary to achieve that support. The one provision which tends to dispute this conclusion concerns the role of a Service component commander (SCC) within a unified command. UNAAF states that the SCC is responsible for "Service intelligence

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<sup>22</sup> UNAAF, pp 3-54 through 3-57

matters." Further, the SCC "will" communicate with the Service Chief only through the CINC on those matters

over which the CINC exercises OPCOM or directive authority. [But on Service-specific matters,] the SCC will normally communicate directly with the Service Chief, informing the CINC as the CINC directs.<sup>23</sup>

The obvious question is, where does intelligence stand in all this talk of Service-specific matters? The answer, unfortunately, appears open to interpretation, such that some intelligence may be "stove-piped" up and down the Service channels, while other intelligence may not.

When it comes to implementing procedures, however, UNAAF is not of much help. The only specific comment on intelligence functions is found in the section on the J2:

The primary function of the Intelligence Division is to ensure the availability of sound intelligence on the characteristics of the area and on enemy locations, activities, and capabilities. Within the scope of the essential elements of information, the Intelligence Division actively participates in directing a concentration of intelligence efforts on the proper enemy items of intelligence interest, at the appropriate time, to ensure adequate intelligence coverage and response and to disclose enemy capabilities and intentions as quickly as possible.<sup>24</sup>

For intelligence implementing doctrine, we must turn to JCS Pub 2-0 (DISJO), which builds on the authoritative foundation established by UNAAF to establish joint centralized intelligence operations and to direct the intelligence activities of subordinate commands. It does not, however, directly refer to UNAAF as the basis for this authority. As the "keystone statement of doctrinal principles of intelligence support to joint operations,"<sup>25</sup> DISJO is applicable to

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<sup>23</sup> UNAAF, pp. 3-26 through 3-27.

<sup>24</sup> UNAAF, pp. 3-39 through 3-40.

<sup>25</sup> JCS Pub 2-0 Doctrine for Intelligence Support to Joint Operations. (Washington: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 October 1989, Final Draft), p. iii. Hereinafter referred to as DISJO

... commanders and staffs of unified and specified (U&S) commands, subordinate components of those commands, joint task forces, and defense intelligence organizations capable of involvement in joint military operations. The doctrine and principles also apply when significant elements of one Service are attached to or provide direct support to forces of another Service <sup>26</sup>

DISJO thus satisfies the requirement for doctrine to be authoritative, or official. It also satisfies the requirement to be non-dogmatic, as reflected in the statement that its approach is non-directive in nature and provides a framework for the application of intelligence procedures, but does not prescribe such procedures.<sup>27</sup>

The role of intelligence doctrine, according to DISJO, is to establish the principles of intelligence support to joint commanders.<sup>28</sup> This it does, both directly through the establishment of Principles of Intelligence, and indirectly through reference to the Intelligence Model and the Intelligence Cycle. The result is a task-oriented approach to operational level intelligence, with the focus on the mechanics of joint intelligence operations, not on the nature of operational level intelligence itself.

The Principles of Intelligence, reproduced at Annex A, are derived from the Principles of War listed in JCS Pub 3-0. They are divided into principles relating to the purpose of intelligence and principles relating to the quality of intelligence.

The nine Principles of Intelligence Purposes and Applications seem to provide a very general framework for defining joint intelligence *tasks*, and the seven Principles of Intelligence Quality similarly seem to be a framework for joint intelligence *procedures*. The former are relatively straightforward and indicate that the primary tasks of operational level intelligence are planning/estimates, current intelligence, targeting, operations

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<sup>26</sup> DISJO, p. iii.

<sup>27</sup> DISJO, pp. 1-1 and 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> DISJO, p. 1-1

security, and indications and warning. The second set of principles are somewhat more complex, particularly when they are combined with their supporting principles. While it seems obvious that intelligence must be timely, objective, usable, ready, complete, accurate, and relevant, the organization and procedures necessary to ensure such qualities are less obvious. For example, one of the supporting principles to the Principle of Timeliness is that intelligence must be prioritized by operational objectives. This implies a single, centralized "prioritizer" for such things as analysis of incoming data, production of reports, and tasking of collection assets. Skip-echelon support, another supporting principle to Timeliness, could have the tendency to subvert prioritization unless carefully specified guidelines were laid out. The point is that DISJO establishes some valid principles concerning intelligence quality, but supporting principles do not seem definitive enough to serve as the foundation for implementing specific military procedures.

The Intelligence Model, reproduced at Annex B, summarizes the functions and components of intelligence at the joint level.<sup>29</sup> The Intelligence Cycle, reproduced at Annex C, is less complete than the Intelligence Model, but it is accepted by and familiar to most readers.

DISJO indirectly uses the three concepts described above as bases for the substance of the publication: outlining key aspects of intelligence support to joint operations, listing joint intelligence functions, and specifying the roles and responsibilities of commanders and staffs. I say "indirectly" because the concepts are sprinkled throughout the publication, not established as keystone concepts up front. The Intelligence Principles, for example, are only listed in the very last chapter, though the pub states they are the fundamental building blocks of joint intelligence operations. Thus, it is difficult for the reader to see direct connections between them and

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<sup>29</sup> DISJO, p II-2

the doctrinal concepts which follow from them logically but which precede them in order of presentation.<sup>30</sup>

In summary, DISJO builds joint intelligence doctrine from four bases. First, its intrinsic authority is derived from the concepts of OPCOM and OPCON described in UNAAB. Note, however, that DISJO only cites UNAAB for the authority to publish joint doctrine, *not* for the authority to establish centralized control of joint intelligence operations;<sup>31</sup> the latter authority can be derived from UNAAB, but DISJO does not specifically address it as such. The second base for joint intelligence doctrine is the set of Intelligence Principles established by DISJO. These principles provide the foundation for intelligence tasks and procedures. The Intelligence Model and the Intelligence Cycle make up the third and fourth bases for joint intelligence doctrine. Though they overlap somewhat with each other and with the Intelligence Principles, they also provide a foundation for the delineation of joint intelligence roles and responsibilities.

Reviewing the five characteristics of doctrine established in Chapter 1, we see first that DISJO is official and non-dogmatic. Second, the Principles of Intelligence upon which it is based appear to be fundamental and well thought-out. However, the more fundamental principle of defining operational level intelligence is not well thought-out, since DISJO does not go beyond a tautologous approach. Third, as the pub is only a Final Draft, it is too soon to tell if its doctrine has been taught to and understood by all elements of the joint forces. Fourth, it does appear flexible enough to accommodate change in the military environment, although one might make an argument that the Principles are so strongly tactical in flavor as to limit their applicability at higher levels of war. Fifth, although complex in presentation, it seems definitive enough to serve as the foundation for implementing specific joint intelligence

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<sup>30</sup> Since DISJO is only a Final Draft, perhaps this confusion will be alleviated in future versions.

<sup>31</sup> DISJO, p iv

procedures. However, there remains some question as to whether it is definitive enough to preclude multiple and widely diverging interpretations of the nature of those procedures.

We have briefly examined the three primary and current sources of written operational level intelligence doctrine: FM 100-5, FM 34-130, and DISJO. None meets all the requirements for intelligence doctrine. Neither of the FMs has authority for joint operations, and operational level intelligence will nearly always be joint in nature. Additionally, FM 100-5 is not really definitive enough to serve as the foundation for implementing specific intelligence procedures. DISJO comes very close to meeting the requirements for intelligence doctrine, but it has some shortcomings and it is still only a draft. Nowhere do we find an unambiguous definition of operational level intelligence, encompassing its unique perspective, specific purpose, and particular focus. The astute reader of current doctrine may be able to organize a joint intelligence center and describe its tasks in general terms, but he has only the fuzziest of notions of where and how to focus the organization's efforts. At best he will have divined that operational level intelligence is a sort of hybrid of strategic and tactical intelligence -- strategic in scope but tactical in detail, bounded in some way by a geographic theater.

But doctrine does not exist only in formal doctrinal publications. It may be tacitly expressed in the established procedures of military forces. Thus, before judging operational level intelligence doctrine to be inadequate and presuming to offer remedies, let us examine the approaches taken by some of our current unified commands.

## **THE IMPLEMENTATION**

In this chapter, we shall look at the approaches to operational level intelligence taken by four Unified Commands. As a framework for describing the various approaches, we shall focus on how each command's intelligence organization addresses four questions:

1. What is operational level intelligence? How does the command define it? Or does it define it?
2. Whom does operational level intelligence principally support? Is the focus on supporting the CINC or on supporting subordinate commanders? Or somewhere else?
3. What tasks does operational level intelligence perform? What is the command's intelligence mission? What intelligence tasks does the command do?
4. Where does operational level intelligence control reside? What is the general tasking authority? What is the general flow of intelligence products and requirements?

### **United States European Command (USEUCOM)**

USEUCOM has a complex and unique mission, in that it is a Unified Command with a specific geographic area of responsibility, and it is also an integral part of the NATO warfighting structure. Thus, many of its intelligence concepts have been developed to support that difficult and sometimes divergent mission. In the following discussion, we shall concentrate on its overall approach to intelligence, differentiating its two major roles only when concepts differ to support each role.<sup>32</sup>

USEUCOM's approach to operational level intelligence is primarily task-oriented, with heavy emphasis on intelligence

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<sup>32</sup> Source data for USEUCOM was a packet of information addressing aspects of intelligence battlefield development, sent in response to my request for information. Hereinafter referred to as USEUCOM

organization at all levels. Only occasionally in written material are there references to "operational intelligence," and these references quite clearly intend the generalized meaning of the term -- that is, intelligence which aids operators. USEUCOM frequently uses the term "theater intelligence," which seems to correspond to the concept of operational level intelligence. Of note, however, "theater intelligence" is not specifically defined, but rather described in terms of its tasks and organization.

The focus of USEUCOM's intelligence effort seems to be on support of multiple commanders and other intelligence agencies, not specifically on support of the CINC (or even his alternate role of SACEUR). This conclusion is based on a reading of the intelligence mission statements of USEUCOM and of Allied Command Europe (ACE).

The intelligence mission of USCINCEUR is to satisfy, without unnecessary duplication of effort, the intelligence requirements of the command and those levied on the command by [other agencies]. Inherent in this mission are the provision of strategic Indications and Warning to support force posturing and readiness, participation in operational and contingency planning, support to crisis management and force employment, and provision of support to supporting commands.<sup>33</sup>

[The intelligence mission of Allied Command Europe is to] provide timely, relevant intelligence to commanders, accurate and detailed enough to support planning and operations.<sup>34</sup>

USEUCOM performs nine principal intelligence tasks:<sup>35</sup>

- Indications and Warning.
- Estimates.
- Support to budgeting and plans.
- Interoperability guidance to components.

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<sup>33</sup> USEUCOM, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> USEUCOM, p. 9

<sup>35</sup> USEUCOM, pp. 14-16

- NBC and medical intelligence support.
- Mapping, charting and geodesy.
- Support to special operations, rear area operations, deception, electronic warfare, C3CM, and maritime operations.
- Exercise support.
- Direction and coordination of intelligence collection.

The intelligence tasks of ACE are somewhat different and are based on the intelligence mission quoted above. Since USEUCOM provides some of the intelligence support to ACE, it must be prepared to participate in the following intelligence tasks:<sup>36</sup>

- Provide basic and current data on Warsaw Pact capabilities, vulnerabilities, and possible options or courses of action.
- Develop and maintain ACE Operational Requirements data base.
- Acquire and disseminate indications and warning of attack.
- Coordinate with adjacent commands.
- Develop and promulgate intelligence collection plans to meet specific mission requirements.
- Disseminate relevant intelligence to other commands.

As regards control of intelligence assets, USEUCOM is generally just a requester of assets both above and below in the chain of command.<sup>37</sup> It passes on taskings to components from higher, and it can itself levy taskings on components in response to validated collection objectives. In all other cases, it requests that components direct their collection assets to respond to some information requirement. Regarding collection requests to higher from components, USEUCOM generally passes them on after automatic

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<sup>36</sup> USEUCOM, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> USEUCOM, p. 72.

validation, although it may in some instances prioritize such requests.<sup>38</sup>

J2 USEUCOM is one of eight dispersed theater all-source analytic centers in Europe. Each of these centers has some information available in common with other centers, and each also has some unique information. Each supports a different commander, and thus each has a different analytic focus. Each center performs intelligence functions as it sees fit; this leads to some duplication of analytical effort, although the extent is difficult to judge, since there is no common terminology to describe the various functions.<sup>39</sup>

In summary, USEUCOM performs "theater intelligence." Though not clearly defined, theater intelligence seems to consist principally of auxiliary intelligence support to subordinate commanders in the form of budgeting and plans, interoperability, MC&G, exercises, and support to specialized operations. It has some authority to levy intelligence requirements on subordinates, but that authority appears limited; its usual function seems to be a passer-on of information and requirements both up and down, not a true director and coordinator of theater intelligence efforts.

### **United States Central Command (USCENTCOM)**

USCENTCOM's approach to operational level intelligence is quite different from USEUCOM's. Due to its mission focus on contingencies and its history of having to respond rapidly to developing crises in a very volatile area of the world, its intelligence effort is directed more towards the tactical end of the operational level of war than to the strategic end. So compelling is this focus, that to USCENTCOM the term "operational intelligence" implies whatever intelligence is immediately necessary to support the military force operating in the area. Very often this is strictly tactical in nature, but

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<sup>38</sup> USEUCOM, pp. 72-73.

<sup>39</sup> USEUCOM, pp. 139-144

it may also involve highly sophisticated short- and long-term estimates produced by national agencies.<sup>40</sup> Thus, in answer to the first question of our analytical framework, we find that USCENTCOM, as alluded to above, does not define operational level intelligence, and indeed maintains a generalized approach to it as that intelligence necessary to the operator. As usual, lacking a specific definition, we turn to a description of its tasks to discover its nature.

USCENTCOM differentiates between the intelligence tasks performed by or in support of a joint task force (JTF), and those performed as part of a normal peacetime infrastructure.<sup>41</sup> The composition of the JTFJ2 is determined by USCENTCOM's Director of Intelligence, and it varies according to the situation.<sup>42</sup> Its size and composition dictate its tasks, but as a minimum it must be capable of requesting relevant intelligence, establishing regular channels of reporting and information flow, and managing requests for information from the JTF commander and his forces.<sup>43</sup> The type and volume of intelligence provided to the JTF commander are likewise somewhat constrained by the JTF communications and intelligence infrastructure, thus the focus tends to be on that which is immediately relevant. This immediately relevant information is provided to the JTFJ2 directly from available sources and indirectly via USCENTCOM J2 from those sources for which there is no direct JTF connectivity.

USCENTCOM's peacetime intelligence tasks are still evolving, but are based on a concept called federated production. The

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<sup>40</sup> Source for data on USCENTCOM is a paper produced in response to my direct query to them on their approach to operational level intelligence. "Organizing USCENTCOM's Intelligence," by MAJ Michael S. Pohler, US Army, and MAJ Richard J. Mueller, US Air Force, 26 February 1990. Hereinafter referred to as USCENTCOM.

<sup>41</sup> USCENTCOM, p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> USCENTCOM, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> USCENTCOM, p. 3

philosophy of federated production is that the peacetime structure ought to resemble the crisis/wartime structure and should support a rapid transition to higher levels of effort. The intelligence tasks inherent in this concept include the establishment and maintenance of air, naval, and ground orders of battle; indications and warning; current and estimative intelligence; and acquisition and integration of automated data handling systems.<sup>44</sup> Within this concept, however, there remains a clear distinction between the type of intelligence required on a daily basis and that required for estimates:

[The] estimative intelligence production effort should be geared toward producing long-term estimates, normal contingency planning, country studies, [and] target and terrain analysis for various standing missions as expressed in existing operational, contingency, and conceptual plans. The daily operational intelligence flow should be constant and consistent, that is, providing an overview or snapshot of the situation on demand, responding to requests from operational forces or staff, and being attuned to events in the AOR which are in different time zones.<sup>45</sup>

Summarizing USCENTCOM's approach to operational level intelligence, we see that they view the term "operational" in its very general sense of simply pertaining to operations. The focus of their intelligence effort is clearly towards the tactical end of the spectrum, with the majority of effort devoted to support of the deployed JTF commander(s). In keeping with this objective, the JTFJ2 is given maximum possible benefit of skip-echelon intelligence connectivity. The USCENTCOM garrison J2 provides whatever intelligence functions that are beyond the capabilities of the JTFJ2. A second and less well developed role for the USCENTCOM J2 involves long-term, estimative intelligence. The primary focus of this effort is to provide a better intelligence data base for future JTFs in future crises/contingencies.

### **United States Atlantic Command (USLANTCOM)**

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<sup>44</sup> USCENTCOM, pp. 6-8.

<sup>45</sup> USCENTCOM, pp. 8-9

USLANTCOM's complex range of missions and its widely varying geographic area of responsibility are reflected in the command's intricate intelligence infrastructure. The available documentation indicates that, as with other unified commands we have examined, the concept of "operational" is perceived strictly as having to do with operations, not with the operational level of war.<sup>46</sup> The general approach to the intelligence problem is to describe organizations and responsibilities in great detail, perhaps as a reflection of the importance of these matters in naval operations. The actual focus of intelligence for each organization is not spelled out, again perhaps as a reflection of the more or less independent nature of naval operations once underway.

[USLANTCOM's intelligence mission is to] ensure the availability of accurate, timely, all-source intelligence necessary to successfully accomplish the command mission, exercise command and control over intelligence activities of USCINCLANT subordinate commands using the operational chain of command, and satisfy the intelligence requirements of operational forces and higher authority in accordance with [national] guidance.<sup>47</sup>

USLANTCOM considers its intelligence structure as hierarchical, with the Theater (Unified Command) Level the highest, descending through Sub-unified Command Level, Component Level, Force Level (Planning), and Force Level (Deployed).<sup>48</sup> The intelligence focus at the Theater Level is described as "intelligence planning on a broad scale," and USCINCLANT is seen as a "consumer of theater-wide intelligence information for force posturing." The differences as one

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<sup>46</sup> In response to my query on their approach to operational level intelligence, USLANTCOM provided a large packet of information, the contents of which included specific responses to questions I had asked, as well as portions of various other pertinent documents. Hereafter this packet will be referred to simply as USLANTCOM

<sup>47</sup> USLANTCOM, Annex B to USCINCLANT OPLAN 2200-90, Intelligence, pp. B-1 and B-2.

<sup>48</sup> USLANTCOM, Figure 2-5, "USLANTCOM Organization "

moves down the echelons are that the intelligence requirements become "increasingly geographically focused, task oriented, and more time sensitive."<sup>49</sup> In support of intelligence planning on a broad scale, the principal intelligence tasks performed by USLANTCOM J2 are intelligence data handling, targeting, collection management, electronic warfare support, current intelligence, and indications and warning.<sup>50</sup>

USLANTCOM J2 exercises fairly strong centralized control over most aspects of intelligence production and collection tasking. In the area of collection tasking, the component commands take intelligence taskings from USCINCLANT for action, and respond to requests for intensified collection and reporting.<sup>51</sup>

[USCINCLANT will] exercise command authority over sub-unified and component headquarters collection requirements management nodes, providing a single focal point for requirements tasking from/to national level and other elements external to the theater.<sup>52</sup>

Of note, this centralization is generally limited to the theater level. Sub-unified commanders do not have directive authority over service element intelligence activities unless specifically stated in the operations order.<sup>53</sup>

Similar centralized control is a characteristic of intelligence production within USLANTCOM. Production responsibilities within the theater are assigned within the capabilities and resources of assigned subordinate and component commands. This is usually limited to tactical production, but such a focus also contributes to

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<sup>49</sup> USLANTCOM, p. 208.

<sup>50</sup> USLANTCOM, Tasks derived from Figure 3-1, "USLANTCOM Intelligence Organization (Norfolk Area Complex) "

<sup>51</sup> USLANTCOM, Annex B to USCINCLANT OPLAN 2200-90, Intelligence, p. B-15.

<sup>52</sup> USLANTCOM, Annex B to USCINCLANT OPLAN 2200-90, Intelligence, pp. B-20 and B-21.

<sup>53</sup> USLANTCOM, Annex B to USCINCLANT OPLAN 2200-90, Intelligence, p. B-21.

theater-wide data base development and maintenance. Of note, JTF commanders are generally vested with the authority to task assigned components for intelligence production.<sup>54</sup>

One final note on USLANTCOM's tendency to centralize intelligence control. Examination of the available material indicates that this approach does not hinder decentralized tactical intelligence operations, particularly for a deployed force. However, USLANTCOM does maintain a certain "hands off" approach to Service intelligence activities, and so there remains a possibility of intelligence "stovepiping," and thus unnecessary duplication of effort.

In summary, then, USLANTCOM, like other commands, views the term "operational" in its very general sense of simply pertaining to operations. The intelligence effort spans a broad spectrum of strategic and tactical intelligence operations. The command practices strong centralization of intelligence production and collection, but does not preclude skip-echelon and Service stovepiping of information.

### **United States Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM)**

USSOUTHCOM, in concert with the other commands examined, does not address the concept of operational level intelligence, nor does it describe the unique aspects (if any) of the intelligence activities it performs. Instead, it deals primarily with intelligence tasks, responsibilities, and organization.<sup>55</sup>

USSOUTHCOM's intelligence mission is as follows:

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<sup>54</sup> USLANTCOM, Encl 1.

<sup>55</sup> Information on USSOUTHCOM is based mainly on extended phone conversations with a knowledgeable representative of the J2. These conversations are hereafter referred to as PHONECON. Some additional information comes from a follow-up packet mailed after the conversations; the packet contained the USSOUTHCOM Intelligence Plan, dated 15 April 1989. This packet is hereafter referred to as USSCIP.

1. Provide accurate, timely, all-source intelligence and counterintelligence to USCINCSO and staff to ensure the successful accomplishment of the command mission.
2. Coordinate intelligence activities of supporting commands, components and other elements assigned/OPCON to USCINCSO.
3. Ensure component and supporting commands provide and receive required theater intelligence data and products.
4. Ensure an effective intelligence collection management program throughout the USCINCSO AOR.
5. Provide intelligence reports to the National Command Authority (NCA).
6. Supervise a targeting program for component forces.
7. Satisfy national level intelligence collection requirements.
8. Implicit in this mission is the exercise of command and control over intelligence activities of USCINCSO subordinate commands through the operational chain of command.<sup>56</sup>

As the above indicates, USSOUTHCOM's approach is to have strong centralized intelligence management throughout the theater. When skip-echelon requests and reporting are authorized, USSOUTHCOM remains an information addressee.

The basis for theater intelligence focus is the system of Essential Elements of Information (EEI) and Other Intelligence Requirements (OIR). Established at all levels, with active participation by commanders, the concept is that EEI/OIR drive the intelligence collection and reporting system. As the situation changes, so do the EEI/OIR, and thus so too does the intelligence focus. If the system is sufficiently responsive, it allows for great flexibility. Thus, USSOUTHCOM's concept of intelligence operations is as follows:

The purpose of USSOUTHCOM intelligence operations is to collect, process, analyze, produce, and disseminate intelligence which satisfies Essential Elements of Information (EEI) and Other Intelligence Requirements (OIR) necessary for successful accomplishment of the command mission. That purpose remains unchanged in peacetime, crisis, or war. However, the focus of USSOUTHCOM intelligence operations and production priorities change as events occur throughout the USCINCSO AOR.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> USSCIP, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> USSCIP, p. 5

Thus, we see that the focus of the USSOUTHCOM intelligence effort, based on the EEI/OIR system, is support of the CINC and subordinate commanders. Intelligence management is centralized at the theater level, and it responds to EEI/OIR in peacetime and during times of crisis and escalation to war. When a JTF is constituted, centralized intelligence management of assigned forces may be delegated to it; if this occurs, the details will be spelled out in the operations order. The JTF remains responsible to USCINCSO in intelligence matters, however, even when skip-echelon connectivity is authorized.<sup>58</sup>

### **Summary of Current Practices**

Each of the approaches apparently works adequately for the command that designed it but it is highly doubtful that any one approach would work as well elsewhere. Before we debate the merits of these current practices as doctrine, let us make some generalizations that will carry us into the next chapter.

First of all, operational level intelligence is not accepted as a practical concept. None of the commands even mentioned it, much less defined it. There is a concept of "operational intelligence," but it refers to tactical matters of immediate interest to operators. We will defer any analysis of this until the next chapter, but it certainly begs the question of the utility of such a concept -- if one can do it without naming it or defining it, is it really worth arguing about?

Secondly, there seems to be a variance in the scope of intelligence pursued by each of the commands. USCENTCOM, for example, tends to zero in on short-term tactical intelligence in support of deployed forces, while USEUCOM tends more towards long-term estimative intelligence and strategic indications and warning.

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<sup>58</sup> PHONECON

Thirdly, there is divergence in the extent to which the commands maintain control of intelligence operations within their theaters. USSOUTHCOM appears to have the most robust centralization, at least conceptually, while USEUCOM leans more towards decentralization. Neither of these approaches is inherently better or worse than the other, but centralized operations would seem to offer the best chance for efficient use of constrained resources.

Finally, there is a set of intelligence tasks common to all of the commands. The set includes data base maintenance and development, indications and warning, support to planning (estimative intelligence), current intelligence, and some degree of intelligence collection management. Each of the commands places different emphasis on these common tasks, and each also accomplishes additional tasks which may be unique to the command's mission.

Turning to the question of doctrine, recall that the reason for examining current practices was to determine if true doctrine could be discerned in them, given the inadequate state of formal intelligence doctrine. The answer, unfortunately, is no. Using the five characteristics of doctrine as a framework for evaluation, we find first that all the practices are official, but only within a given theater and only for the forces subordinate to the individual command. Second, while each approach may be based on certain principles, these are not explicitly stated, and there is no way to tell if they are "fundamental" enough to have general application. Third, except within the particular theater, the practices are not taught to and/or widely understood by all military forces. Fourth, while some of the practices seem easily flexible enough to accommodate change in the military environment, others are plainly applicable only to specific circumstances in specific theaters. Finally, all are certainly definitive enough to serve as the foundation for implementing specific military procedures; unfortunately, they are a little too definitive, in that they in fact constitute specific military procedures.

## **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS**

When it is not a question of acting oneself but of persuading others in discussion, the need is for clear ideas and the ability to show their connection with each other. So few people have yet acquired the necessary skill at this that most discussions are a futile bandying of words; either they leave each man sticking to his own ideas or they end with everyone agreeing, for the sake of agreement, on a compromise with nothing to be said for it.

Clear ideas on these matters do, therefore, have some practical value. The human mind, moreover, has a universal thirst for clarity, and longs to feel itself part of an orderly scheme of things.<sup>59</sup>

Perhaps this is a good point to stop and review where we are in our maze of facts and logic. Our original intent was to answer a research question: "Is current doctrine on operational level intelligence adequate for the development of a joint theater intelligence architecture?" What we found, unfortunately, was a double dose of bad news: we could find neither a definition of operational level intelligence that did not describe it in terms of itself, nor could we find any operational level intelligence doctrine that met the five requirements for military doctrine. Indeed, the very question may be flawed by virtue of erroneous assumptions, given that we still do not know what operational level intelligence is; that there is no operational level intelligence doctrine to judge adequate or inadequate; and, most perplexing of all, at least four Unified Commands seem to be well on their way to developing joint theater intelligence architectures without the benefit of doctrine and without even acknowledging the existence of operational level intelligence! Let us therefore reassess these assumptions, dealing first with the problem of doctrine and then with the problem of definition.

Concerning doctrine, the evidence not surprisingly forces us to conclude that there is currently no operational level intelligence doctrine. FM 100-5 has a rather extensive discussion of the concept,

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<sup>59</sup> Clausewitz, p 71

but its shortcomings as true doctrine have been noted above. DISJO, the final draft version of JCS Pub 2-0, is not really official yet, and its other shortcomings as true doctrine have also been noted. Existing theater intelligence plans are just that -- plans for a specific theater, and they are not suitable as doctrine. More importantly, though, neither DISJO nor the theater intelligence plans are really concerned with operational level intelligence; rather, they deal with the mechanics of joint intelligence operations. Much of what they cover is tactical in nature, and some of it is strategic, but little if any actually involves operational level intelligence.

The evidence further forces us to conclude that much of the doctrinal problem is rooted in our failure to define operational level intelligence. Webster's tells us that to define something means:

to determine or set down the boundaries; to trace the precise outlines of, to determine or state the extent or nature of; to describe exactly; to give the distinguishing characteristics of; to constitute the distinction of; or to differentiate.<sup>60</sup>

Using these criteria, nowhere in official publications is the term operational level intelligence properly defined. In light of the fact that military intelligence as a whole is bounded on the low end by tactical intelligence and on the high end by strategic intelligence, saying that operational level intelligence encompasses the details of tactical intelligence and much of the scope of strategic intelligence does not really bound it much. By attributing to it the characteristics of both tactical and strategic intelligence, we have not distinguished or differentiated it. And the variance of scope that we find among the Unified Commands indicates that there is no common understanding of the extent or nature of operational level intelligence.

All of this brings us back to a question we posed earlier: Is it really necessary to define operational level intelligence? The answer is yes, for at least two reasons. The first is that joint operations

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<sup>60</sup> Webster's, p. 362.

require a common lexicon. Without a precise definition of operational level intelligence, one person can be thinking about intelligence support to bridge the gap between strategic assessments and tactical information, and another can be thinking about the specific information required to establish a safe corridor through enemy air defenses. If those two people happen to be talking to each other, the possibilities for misunderstandings -- and perhaps tragic miscalculation -- are obvious. The second reason to clearly define operational level intelligence has to do with resources. The current "definitions" imply that operational level intelligence, far from being a bridge between tactical and strategic intelligence, is in fact a product of the two, limited only slightly by geography. This leads to the conclusion that the operational level intelligence organization must be capable of knowing, manipulating, maintaining, and producing a vast array of data, from the technical characteristics of the slightest electronic blip to sophisticated "trickle-down" assessments of the effects of global economic trends. Such capabilities require vast resources. While we may eventually conclude that operational level intelligence must in fact have these capabilities, we should base such a conclusion on a precise definition of the concept, not on the vague descriptions we currently use.

Our inability to properly define operational level intelligence dooms to failure all subsequent efforts in that area. Indeed, the problem goes to the very *raison d'être* of intelligence: What must the commander know about the enemy? We have failed to identify this in any coherent manner for the operational level of war. The doctrinal and implementational literature ignores the essential nature of this *intelligence* and concentrates on the nature of *intelligence support*. Even when we lay aside the tautologous formal definitions and concentrate on the task-oriented descriptions of the concept, we see that the most detailed descriptions relate to intelligence management, and only the most general verbiage deals with intelligence analysis. It is of limited practical value to say, as FM 100-5 does for example, that operational level intelligence must extend to social, political, economic, and personality matters which

may affect enemy activity within a theater of operations, as well as the interrelationship of localities and facilities within and adjacent to the theater of operations.<sup>61</sup> To specify that the focus of operational level intelligence must be the determination of the enemy's centers of gravity is somewhat more useful, but still very general.

The essence of operational level intelligence is the assessment of enemy operational level linkages, *not* the linkage itself of our own tactical and strategic intelligence. There is a great difference. By describing operational level intelligence in terms of a bridge between tactical and strategic intelligence, we have fallen into the trap of believing that the only way to build the bridge is to own both sides of the river -- that is, the only way to do operational level intelligence is to do both tactical and strategic intelligence. And the only feasible way to approach such a daunting task is to focus, as we have done, on intelligence management. But if we could adequately define an analytical focus for operational level intelligence, we could turn our attention away from this inward look at intelligence systems, and outward to the condition and vulnerabilities of the enemy, which is where it properly belongs.

Having said that the essence of operational level intelligence is the assessment of enemy operational level linkages, we must get specific about the nature of those linkages in order to achieve the desired focus.

... it is clear that war should never be thought of as *something autonomous* but always as an *instrument of policy* -- this way of looking at it will show us how wars must vary with the nature of their motives and of the situations which give rise to them.<sup>62</sup>

... If we do not learn to regard a war, and the separate campaigns of which it is composed, as a chain of linked engagements each leading to the next, but instead succumb to the idea that the capture of certain geographical points or the seizure of undefended provinces are *of value in themselves*, we are liable to regard them as windfall profits. In so doing, and in ignoring the fact that they are

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<sup>61</sup> p. 29.

<sup>62</sup> Clausewitz, p. 88

links in a continuous chain of events, we also ignore the possibility that their possession may later lead to definite disadvantages<sup>63</sup>

Writing in the early 19th Century, Clausewitz established the foundations for our modern concepts of the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war, and their linkage to each other and to political objectives. Additionally, he identified the complexity of linkages among a nation's political, social, and military institutions.<sup>64</sup> It is this very perspective which doctrinal publications seek to portray when describing the strategic aspects of operational level intelligence. The problem is that they have expressed the perspective simply by identifying broad categories of interest instead of specific relationships.

Drawing upon the basic definition of intelligence found in JCS Pub 1,<sup>65</sup> let us pose an alternative approach. Operational level intelligence is the product resulting from the processing of information concerning foreign nations within or significantly affecting a theater of operations or theater of war. Its focus is the identification of the way in which those nations use or may use their military means within the theater to achieve political ends. Operational level intelligence seeks to answer such questions as:

- What are the enemy's military objectives at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels? Do these complement or contrast with the goals of other elements of national power? How do these strong or weak linkages affect the enemy's military operations in our theater?
- How do geography, climate, and infrastructure affect the enemy's military operations in our theater? How do their limitations or advantages affect strategic perceptions of what is militarily achievable within the theater?

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<sup>63</sup> Clausewitz, p. 182.

<sup>64</sup> Clausewitz, p. 89.

<sup>65</sup> p. 188 The NATO definition is used as the base

- What non-military factors influence the enemy's military doctrine/courses of action/tactics in theater?<sup>66</sup> How can we exploit these linkages?
- How might the enemy commander manipulate non-military elements of power at his level to help him accomplish his mission?
- What are the intelligence indications that a critical enemy linkage has been weakened or broken?

This approach is offered only as a point of departure, and the reader will no doubt think of many ways to improve it. The point is that such an approach deals with the nature of operational level intelligence, not operational level intelligence organization and management. Once the joint community reaches a consensus on what their general intelligence focus must be, they can design organizations and procedures to accomplish that focus.

Returning at last to our research question, we conclude that current doctrine is *not* adequate for the development of a joint theater intelligence architecture. This conclusion is based on the answers we have found to the two major subordinate questions posed by the research question. First, both current literature and practices fall short of being doctrine, thus there is no operational level intelligence doctrine. Second, the lack of a precise definition of operational level intelligence has led to a focus on intelligence management, not on the nature of the intelligence needed by an operational level commander. Additionally, the perceived need for operational level intelligence to encompass all of tactical intelligence as well as a good portion of strategic intelligence has led to intelligence structures "a mile wide and an inch deep." That is, joint intelligence missions imply a staggering array of tasks to be accomplished by making use of an inconceivably large amount of data. But in fact, the structures are unable to do what is asked of them without substantial help from national intelligence resources.

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<sup>66</sup> This line of thought was suggested to me by Dr. Robert Epstein during an informal conversation at the School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, on 20 March 1990.

This has not been a problem in recent times, since we have not had to deal with more than one major crisis at a time. However, if there is competition for resources, or if the available resources are otherwise curtailed, the ability of operational level intelligence organizations to carry out the tasks they have set themselves is questionable.

On the other hand, once we have a good workable definition of operational level intelligence, many of the problems with doctrine will be more easily solved. With such a solid base, future doctrine might have a general format as follows:

- Definition of operational level intelligence.
- Authority/scope of the publication. In the case of joint doctrine, includes authority to task subordinate intelligence assets.
- Establishment of fundamental principles for the production of operational level intelligence.
- Establishment of doctrinal guidance, based on the principles, to serve as the foundation for organizations, tasks, and procedures common to all operational level commands but allowing for mission and regional adaptation.

This monograph has suggested a different approach to the concept of operational level intelligence, focusing on enemy operational level linkages instead of on friendly ones. With a common and precise understanding of the nature of operational level intelligence, we can go on to devise appropriate ways to accomplish it, thereby providing the commander the intelligence he needs for victory at the operational level of war.

## **ANNEX A: Principles of Intelligence**

### **Principles of Intelligence Purposes and Applications:<sup>1</sup>**

Identification and Determination of Objective: Intelligence must aid commanders in identifying and determining military objectives that will attain or assist national strategy and objectives, or their derivative and supporting military objectives.

Command Intelligence: The J-2 is responsible for directly supporting the commander with complete and objective views of the situation. This is coincident with but independent of his responsibilities to support the commander's staff and other commands.

Planning and Conducting Operations: Intelligence is used in identifying and selecting tactical objectives and in planning and executing the tactics.

Targeting Intelligence: Targeting includes all disruptive and destructive applications of force and spans strategic, operational, and tactical levels and environments of military operations.

Operations Termination/Reorientation: Intelligence assists commanders in determining when objectives have been attained so that forces may be reoriented or operations terminated.

Security of Operations - Deception of Enemy: Intelligence must provide the commander an understanding of the enemy so denial and deception measures can be coordinated to influence the enemy's perception of both his and the friendly situations.

Security of Operations - Avoiding Deception and Surprise: Intelligence must be structured and operated to reduce the chance of deception and surprise. It also must be flexible and able to recover if surprise does occur.

Indications and Warning: Intelligence must provide commanders with advance indications and warning of a threat or impending attacks in sufficient time to preempt or counter them.

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<sup>1</sup> DISJO, Table verbatim from p. V-4.

**Deterrence:** Strategic and operational deterrence is both a derivative benefit and a purpose of intelligence systems structured and functioning to avoid deception and surprise, and ready to support operations.

### **Principles of Intelligence Quality, with supporting principles:<sup>2</sup>**

**Timeliness:** Intelligence must be available and accessible in time to effectively use it.

- Early J2 participation.
- Intelligence prioritized by operational objectives.
- Early constitution of intelligence infrastructure.
- Higher levels responsible for tactical intelligence early in planning process.
- Commander's requirements valid by virtue of the fact that they are commander's requirements.
- Rapid, secure, reliable, redundant communications.
- Skip-echelon support.
- Analyst-to-analyst exchange.
- Continuous operations.

**Objectivity:** Intelligence must be objective, unbiased, undistorted, and free from political influence or constraint.

- Encourage opinion/dissent.
- All-source objectivity.
- Distinguish between fact and deduction.

**Usability:** The form in which intelligence is provided to the user must be suitable for application upon receipt without additional analysis.

**Readiness:** Intelligence systems must be responsive to the existing and contingent operational intelligence requirements of commanders, staffs, and forces.

- Single warfighting support structure.
- Maintain flexibility.

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<sup>2</sup> Basic principles and definitions are verbatim from DISJO, p V-7 Supporting principles are summarized/paraphrased from pp. V-8 through V-29.

- Survivability.
- National and Theater intelligence organizations responsive to operational and tactical requirements.
- Keep intelligence current.
- Establish HUMINT early.

**Completeness:** Commanders, staffs, and forces must receive all the intelligence information they need to meet their responsibilities and accomplish their missions.

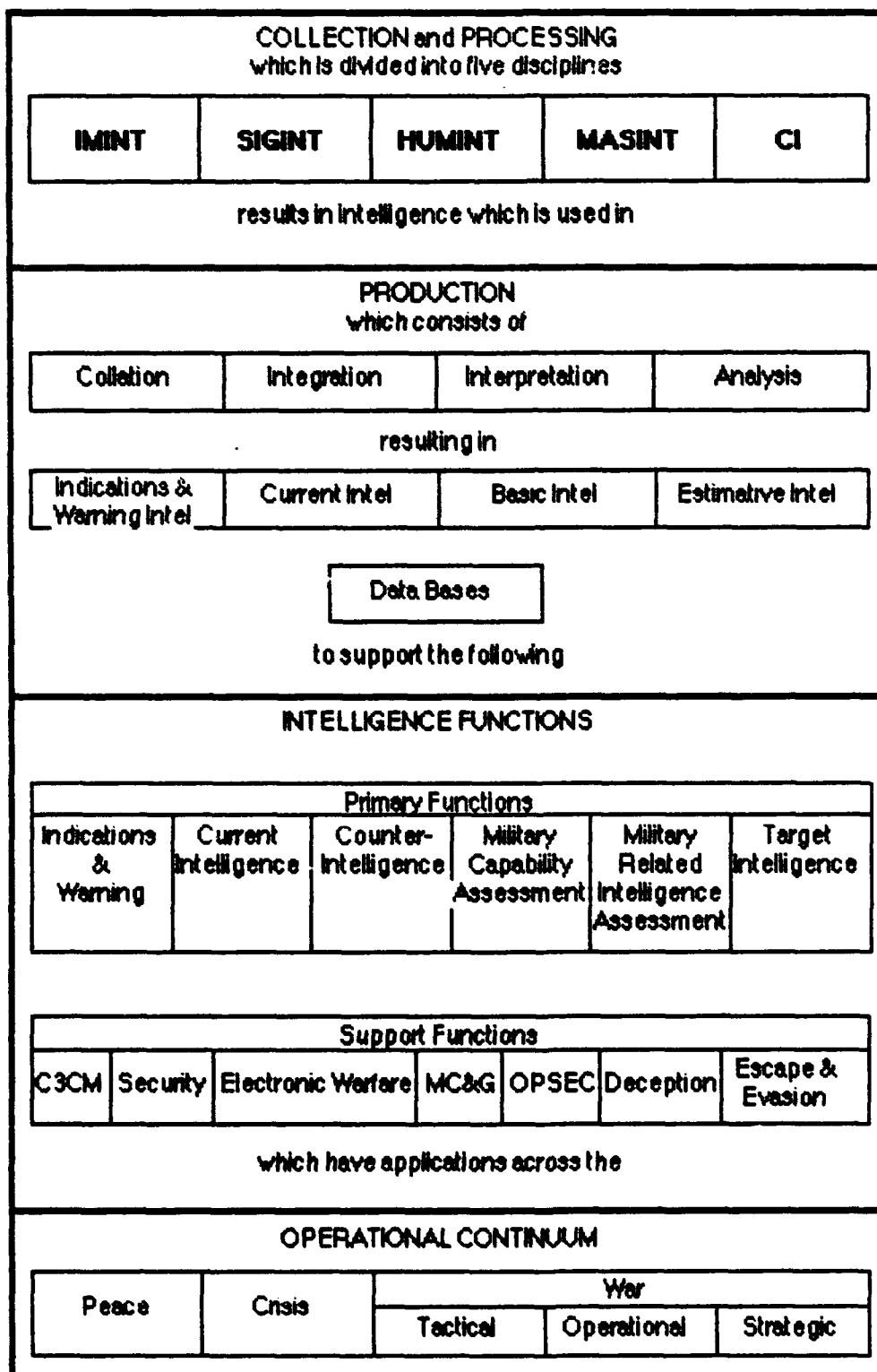
- Assure accessibility to intelligence.
- Joint commander determines the direction of the intelligence effort.
- Unified intelligence effort.
- Fully understand enemy.
- Share capabilities.
- Use all-source approach.
- Use intelligence liaison.
- See operating units as collectors.

**Accuracy:** Intelligence must be factually correct and convey the situation as it actually exists.

**Relevance:** Intelligence must contribute to an understanding of the situation, and planning, conducting, and evaluating operations.

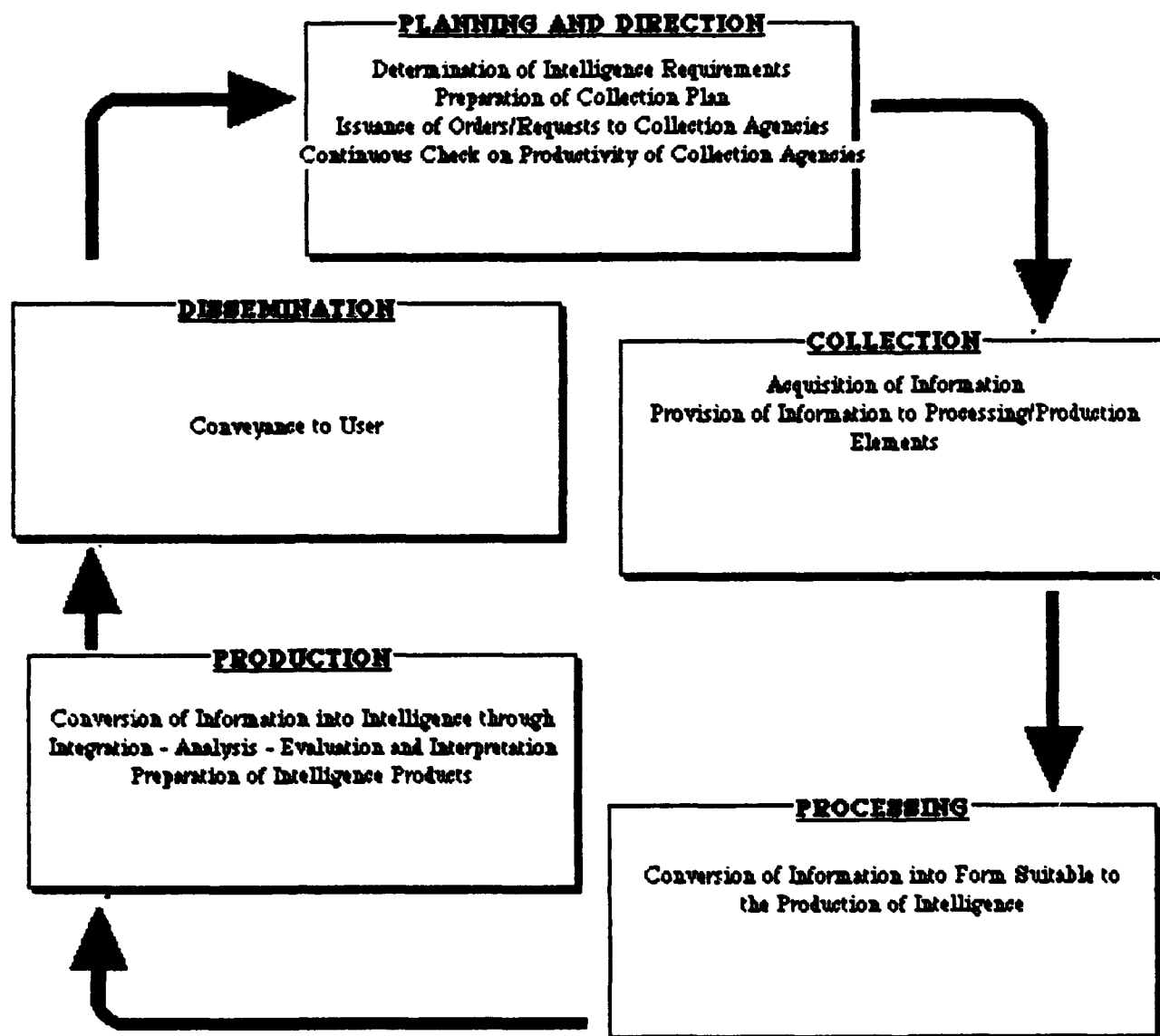
- Do intelligence analysis in context of operations.
- Keep intelligence lessons learned.

## ANNEX B: INTELLIGENCE MODEL



## ANNEX C

### INTELLIGENCE CYCLE



C-1

Reproduced from Final Draft of DISJO, p. II-6

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